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ABSTRACT

Evaluation findings concerning six Austin Independent School District (AISD) Assessment Centers are presented. The report describes the AISD assessment center, summarizes the evaluation findings, and provides conclusions and recommendations. The AISD assessment center is one of seven components which make up the District's Administrative Leadership program. The other components are early identification, recruitment, screening, development, selection and placement, and evaluation. Issues addressed in this interim report include: size of pool of unassessed applicants, ethnicity of assessment center participants, new appointments and promotions among assessment center participants available in the administrative candidate bank, and the relationship between assessment center scores and administrator perceiver scores. Results indicated the size of the pool of unassessed applicants continued to grow. The ethnic distribution of participants was in agreement with the goals of the Faculty/Staff Recruitment Plan. Assessment center participants' success rate was high. More high scoring candidates were appointed, or promoted, than low scoring. A few low scoring assessment center participants were appointed, or promoted, to new administrative positions. A low correlation was found between assessment center scores and administrator perceiver scores. (DWH)

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AISD ASSESSMENT CENTER:

1983-84 Interim Report for
the First Six Assessment Centers

January, 1984

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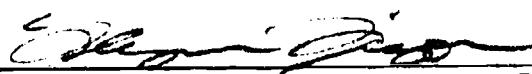
AISD ASSESSMENT CENTER:

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1983-84 Interim Report for
the First Six Assessment Centers

January, 1984

Approved:



Glynn Ligon, Ph.D.
Acting Director, Research and Evaluation

Publication No. 83.38

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AISD Assessment Center: 1983-84 Interim Report for the First Six Assessment Centers

Evaluation findings concerning the AISD Assessment Center are presented in the 1983-84 Interim Report. The issues addressed in this report are: (1) Size of pool of unassessed applicants, (2) Ethnicity of Assessment Center participants, (3) Success rate of Assessment Center participants, (4) New appointments and promotions among Assessment Center participants, (5) Assessment Center participants available in administrative candidate bank, (6) Relationship between Assessment Center scores and administrator perceiver scores. The major findings are summarized below.

- The size of the pool of unassessed applicants continued to grow.
- The ethnic distribution of the Assessment Center participants was in agreement with the goals of the District's Faculty/Staff Recruitment Plan.
- The success rate of the Assessment Center participants was high.
- The success rate of the Black participants was much lower than that of the Hispanic and Anglo/Other participants. The success rate of the male participants was lower than that of the female participants.
- There were more high-scoring candidates being appointed or promoted than there were low-scoring candidates.
- A few low-scoring Assessment Center participants were appointed or promoted to new administrative positions.
- The number of successful participants being placed represented 26% of the total number of participants who successfully completed the six Assessment Centers and 31% of the total promotions and new appointments.
- Thirty-five participants who have successfully completed the Assessment Center are available in the administrative candidate bank.
- A low correlation was found between the Assessment Center scores and the administrator perceiver scores.

Summary page from the Office of Research and Evaluation Report on the AISD Assessment Center, ORE Application Number 83.38.

INTERIM REPORT

Project Title: AISD Assessment Center: 1983-84 Interim Report for the First Six Assessment Centers

Contact Persons: Glynn Ligon, Maria Ramos-Cancel Wicker

Decision Question: Should AISD continue to use Assessment Centers in the selection or promotion of administrators?

Major Positive Findings:

1. The overall ethnicity distribution of the Assessment Center participants (Hispanic, 30%; Black, 17%; Anglo/Other, 53%) was in agreement with the goals of the District's Faculty/Staff Recruitment Plan.
2. In general, the success rate of the Assessment Center participants was high (75% for Assessment Centers 1, 2, and 6; 67% for Assessment Centers 4 and 5; 56% for Assessment Center 3).
3. Examination of the participants being placed reveals that there were more high-scoring candidates being appointed or promoted than there were low-scoring candidates (13 vs. 3).
4. Thirty-five participants who successfully completed the Assessment Center and have not been already placed are available in the administrative candidate bank. This represents a source for future appointments and promotions.

Major Findings Requiring Action:

1. While the number of new applicants decreased somewhat with subsequent Assessment Centers, the size of the pool of unassessed applicants continued to grow (from 70 after Assessment Center 2 to 214 after Assessment Center 6).
2. The success rate of the Black participants was much lower than that of the Hispanic and Anglo/Other participants (41% vs. 68% and 79%, respectively). The success rate of the male participants was lower than that of the female participants (59% vs. 75%).

3. Examination of the participants being placed reveals that high-scoring candidates were not the only ones receiving new appointments or promotions. Also, the number of successful participants being placed represented 26% of the total number of participants who successfully completed the six Assessment Centers and 31% of the total promotions and new appointments. This indicates that greater emphasis was placed on information not obtained from the Assessment Center and/or placement decisions were made in response to hiring considerations agreed to by the District.
4. A low correlation (.24) was found between the Assessment Center scores and the administrator perceiver scores obtained by the participants. This indicates that, overall, the administrator perceiver scores may not be a very good predictor of Assessment Center performance.
5. The relationship between the Assessment Center scores and on-the-job performance after new placement could not be determined for the present report, primarily because the latter measures have not yet been completed. This relationship should be examined after the on-the-job performance measures are completed.

These are areas that need to be examined more carefully in future evaluations if AISD wishes to continue using Assessment Centers in the selection or promotion of administrators.

Recommendation:

Based on the present evaluation findings, it seems advisable for AISD to fulfill its three-year commitment to the Assessment Center process. The remaining part of this time period may allow the District to strengthen those areas which have proven to be successful and to work on those that seem to require more attention. This time period may also allow the District to gather other information useful in deciding whether to continue using the Assessment Center after the three-year commitment has been fulfilled. Also, the possibility of conducting a validation study, similar to the one performed by NASSP, may be considered.

INTRODUCTION

This is the second Interim Report for the AISD Assessment Center. The first report, completed in January, 1983, was for the first two Assessment Centers. The present report is for all six centers, including the first two. The first part of this report gives a brief description of the AISD Assessment Center. The second part summarizes the evaluation findings, and the third provides some conclusions and recommendations.

DESCRIPTION OF THE AISD ASSESSMENT CENTER

The AISD Assessment Center is one of seven components which comprise the District's Administrative Leadership Program developed for the purpose of staffing administrative positions with the best qualified individuals. The other components are: Early Identification, Recruitment, Screening, Development, Selection and Placement, and Evaluation. These are illustrated in Figure 1.

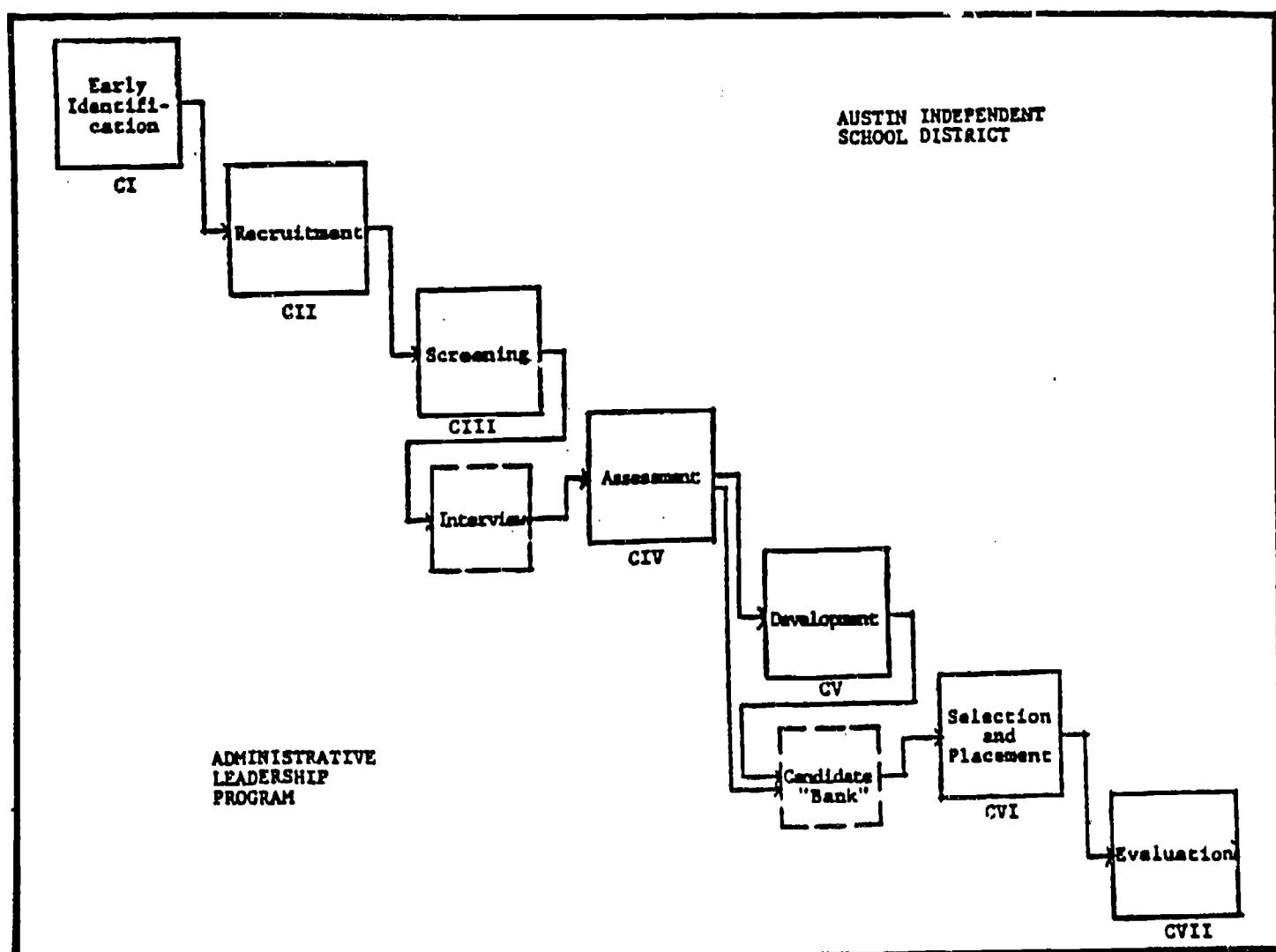


Figure 1. COMPONENTS OF THE DISTRICT'S ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM.

The Assessment Center is a two-day event during which twelve candidates respond to assigned tasks that rely heavily on simulation techniques. The tasks are designed to assess administrative skills in twelve identified areas listed in Figure 2. Candidates are observed by six trained assessors who spend the remainder of the week in study, consultation, and writing. The result is a recommendation and a written report on each candidate. This report is shared with the candidate in an individual conference with the center director usually within a week to ten days after the completion of the Assessment Center. The report is confidential and is available only to the candidate and to District administrators responsible for filling vacant positions.

Skill Areas Given Priority	Other Skill Areas Assessed
Problem Analysis	Organizational Ability
Judgement	Decisiveness
Sensitivity	Stress Tolerance
Leadership	Educational Values
	Oral Communication
	Written Communication
	Personal Motivation
	Range of Interest

Figure 2. ASSESSMENT CENTER ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS AREAS.

The twelve candidates who participate in each Assessment Center are selected through the screening component of the Administrative Leadership Program. The projected needs of the District are taken into account in the selection process, as well as the District's Affirmative Faculty/Staff Recruitment Plan. The administrative profile and report resulting from the Assessment Center is intended to serve as a basis for making staff selection and placement decisions. Candidates who successfully complete the Assessment Center have their files placed in the District's administrative candidate bank, where they will be considered for any vacancy for which they are qualified. In addition, they will have the opportunity to participate in the development component of the Administrative Leadership Program.

Successful completion of an Assessment Center is defined as having received from assessors an overall consensus rating of three or higher. The rating scale is from one to five, with five being the highest (1=poor, 2=below average, 3=average, 4=above average, 5=outstanding). The overall consensus rating represents the overall level of performance of the candidate as judged by the assessors.

The AISD Assessment Center is a part of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Assessment Project, which began in 1975 after extensive research and development in cooperation with the American Psychological Association. The Assessment Center model, which has been successful in business and industry, was adapted to the educational setting to assess the administrative skills needed by elementary and secondary building level administrators. This model has received the support of the National Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association. A summary of the findings from the NASSP Assessment Center validation study can be found in the 1982-83 Interim Report of the first two AISD Assessment Centers (ORE Publication No. 82.40). This report also includes information pertaining to cost and to the initial implementation efforts to ensure that the Center is implemented in the manner intended by NASSP.

EVALUATION FINDINGS FOR THE AISD ASSESSMENT CENTER

Six Assessment Centers were offered from March, 1982 to November, 1983. Application to participate in the Assessment Center is open to persons seeking their first administrative positions or a promotion in the division of instruction. The applications are periodically screened to determine which applicants will go through the Administrator Perceiver Interview developed by Selection Research Incorporated (SRI). Assessment Center participants are selected from those interviewed. Applicants not selected to participate in the Assessment Center may remain in the pool for possible selection at a later date.

Application and Selection Process - Pool of Unassessed Applicants

Figure 3 summarizes the application and selection process in terms of the total number of applicants, the number of applicants interviewed, and the number of applicants assessed. The figure shows that 286 people applied for the six Assessment Centers, the first having the largest number of applicants. Forty-four percent (125) of the total applicants were interviewed, and of these 58% (72) were selected to participate in the Assessment Centers. While the number of new applicants has decreased somewhat with subsequent Assessment Centers, the size of the pool of unassessed applicants continues to grow.

Ethnicity and Sex of Applicants

Figure 4 gives a breakdown of the applicants according to ethnicity and sex. Of the 72 applicants assessed, 30% were Hispanic, 17% Black, and 53% Anglo or Other. These percentages are in agreement with the goals of the District's Faculty/Staff Recruitment Plan. With respect to sex, Figure 4 shows that the male/female percentages for the applicants assessed are not in line with the male/female percentages for the total applicants (applicants assessed: 38% male/62% female; total applicants: 52% male/48% female). However, the percentages for the applicants assessed are consistent with the District's effort to maintain female representation in administrative positions.

AC	ALL APPLICANTS				APPLICANTS INTERVIEWED				APPLICANTS ASSESSED			
	CUMULATIVE		SIZE OF POOL		CUMULATIVE		SIZE OF POOL		CUMULATIVE		NEW	
	TOTALS	NEW	BEFORE	AFTER	N	(%)*	APPLICANTS	AC	AC	N	(%)**	APPLICANTS
1	82	82	82	70	33	(40%)	33	33	21	12	(36%)	12 (15%) (36%)
2	134	52	122	110	52	(39%)	19	40	28	24	(46%)	12 (10%) (30%)
3	182	48	158	146	72	(40%)	20	48	36	36	(50%)	12 (8%) (25%)
4	206	24	170	158	88	(43%)	16	52	40	48	(55%)	12 (7%) (23%)
5	235	29	187	175	101	(43%)	13	53	41	60	(59%)	12 (6%) (23%)
6	281	46	221	209	122	(43%)	21	62	50	72	(59%)	12 (5%) (19%)
AC Not Identified:												
	5	5	5	5	3		3	3	3	0		0
Total: 286												
	226	214	125	(44%)	24		65	53	72	(58%)		

*Cumulative total of applicants interviewed divided by cumulative total of all applicants.

**Cumulative total of applicants assessed divided by cumulative total of applicants interviewed.

***New applicants assessed divided by size of pool of all unassessed applicants before AC.

****New applicants assessed divided by size of pool of applicants interviewed before AC.

Figure 3. NUMBER OF APPLICANTS AND SIZE OF POOL OF UNASSESSED APPLICANTS FOR EACH CENTER.

APPLICANTS (N)	ETHNICITY			SEX	
	HISPANIC N	BLACK N	ANGLO/OTHER N	FEMALE N	MALE N
APPLICANTS ASSESSED (72)	22 (30)	12 (17)	38 (53)	45 (62)	27 (38)
APPLICANTS INTERVIEWED (125)	28 (22)	16 (13)	81 (65)	76 (61)	49 (39)
APPLICANTS NOT INTERVIEWED (161)	34 (21)	29 (18)	98 (61)	62 (39)	99 (61)
TOTAL APPLICANTS (286)	62 (22)	45 (16)	179 (62)	138 (48)	148 (52)

Figure 4. NUMBER OF APPLICANTS BY ETHNICITY AND SEX.*

Ethnicity and Sex of Participants for each Assessment Center

Figure 5 gives a breakdown of the participants according to center, ethnicity, and sex. This figure shows that although the overall percentages for ethnicity were in agreement with the goals of the District's Faculty/Staff Recruitment Plan, representation of the three ethnic groups varied among centers. However, it would be difficult, and possibly unrealistic, to attempt to fit the goals to each Assessment Center.

*As a goal, the District attempts to recruit and employ minorities in the following percentages: Black (15-20%), Hispanic (25-30%), Anglo/Other (50-55%). It attempts also to place male and female representation at all levels of employment whenever possible.

ASSESS- MENT CENTER	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	ETHNICITY			SEX		
		HISPANIC N	BLACK (%)	ANGLO/OTHER N (%)	FEMALE N (%)	MALE N (%)	
1	12	3	(25)	2	(17)	7	(58)
2	12	3	(25)	1	(8)	8	(67)
3	12	4	(33)	3	(25)	5	(42)
4	12	4	(33)	2	(17)	6	(50)
5	12	3	(25)	3	(25)	6	(50)
6	12	5	(42)	1	(8)	6	(50)
TOTAL	72	22	(30)	12	(17)	38	(53)
						45	(62)
						27	(38)

Figure 5. NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS BY CENTER, ETHNICITY AND SEX.

Administrator Perceiver Scores of Assessment Center Participants

Applicants who were interviewed received an administrator perceiver score. The highest possible score was 60 and the lowest, zero. Figure 6 shows the mean score received by the group of applicants who later participated in the Assessment Center. This score is broken down by ethnicity and sex. The group of Anglo/Other participants obtained the highest mean score compared to the Hispanic and Black whose mean scores differed only slightly from each other. There was a wide range of scores in all ethnic groups, with the Anglo/Other group having the highest minimum-maximum scores. The mean score for the female group was higher than the mean score for the male group. The female group had higher minimum-maximum scores. The wide range of scores indicate that the administrator perceiver score was not the most important factor in selecting the Assessment Center participants. Also, the difference in minimum-maximum scores among groups indicates that the criteria might have varied somewhat depending on other factors, such as ethnicity and sex.

	ETHNICITY			SEX	
	Hispanic	Black	Anglo/Other	Female	Male
Mean	30.05	29.50	34.71	33.36	30.85
Range	29	17	28	31	23
(Min.-Max.)*	(20-49)	(23-40)	(27-55)	(24-55)	(20-44)

*Lowest and highest scores

Figure 6. MEAN AND RANGE OF ADMINISTRATOR PERCEIVER SCORES BY ETHNICITY AND SEX FOR THE INTERVIEWED ASSESSMENT CENTER PARTICIPANTS.

Success Rate of Assessment Center Participants

In general, the success rate of the Assessment Center participants was high. Figure 7 shows that 69% of the 72 participants successfully completed the Assessment Center. Higher ratings were obtained in Assessment Centers 1, 2, and 6, where 75% of the participants received an overall consensus rating of three or higher. The group mean rating is highest for the second Assessment Center and lowest for the third.

A.C.	Partic- ipants	RATINGS					SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION		GROUP MEAN RATING
		1	2	3	4	5	N	%	
1	12	0	3	5	4	0	9	(75)	3.08
2	12	0	3	3	5	1	9	(75)	3.33
3	12	2	3	6	1	0	7	(58)	2.50
4	12	1	3	5	3	0	8	(67)	2.83
5	12	0	4	6	2	0	8	(67)	2.83
6	12	0	3	7	2	0	9	(75)	2.92
Total	72	3	19	32	17	1	50	69%	2.92

Figure 7. RATINGS RECEIVED BY PARTICIPANTS, SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION, AND GROUP MEAN RATINGS IN THE SIX ASSESSMENT CENTERS.

The success rate was high for Anglo/Other and Hispanic participants. However, this is not the case for the Black participants. Figure 8 shows that 79% of the Anglo/Others and 68% of the Hispanics received a rating of three or higher, whereas 41% of the Blacks received the same rating. Successful completion was higher among the female participants. The group mean rating was highest for the Anglo/Other and female participants.

RATINGS	ALL PARTICIPANTS		ETHNICITY				SEX	
	N	(%)	HISPANIC	BLACK	ANGLO/OTHER	FEMALE	MALE	
1	3	(4)	0	(0)	3	(25)	0	(0)
2	19	(26)	7	(32)	4	(33)	8	(21)
3	32	(44)	10	(45)	4	(33)	18	(47)
4	17	(24)	5	(23)	1	(8)	11	(29)
5	1	(1)	0	(0)	0	(0)	1	(3)
TOTAL	72	(100)	22	(30)	12	(17)	38	(53)
SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION	50	(69)	15	(68)	5	(41)	30	(79)
GROUP MEAN RATINGS	2.92		2.91		2.25		3.13	
							3.02	
							2.74	

Figure 8. RATINGS RECEIVED BY PARTICIPANTS, SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION, AND GROUP MEAN RATINGS BY ETHNICITY AND SEX.

New Appointments and Promotions Among Assessment Center Participants

Since July, 1982, 51 new administrative appointments or promotions for principals, assistant principals, and supervisors/coordinators have been made. This figure does not include transfers within the same position to a new location. Sixteen of the participants in the first six Assessment Centers have received new appointments or promotions and two have changed locations. Figure 9 shows the Assessment Center ratings of those who were promoted or newly appointed. Thirteen of those 16 participants had successfully completed the Assessment Center. The fact that this figure represents only 26% of the total number of participants who successfully completed the six centers and only 31% of the total promotions and new appointments indicates that the Assessment Center rating has not been the most important information in the consideration of a candidate for administrative positions.

PARTICIPANTS	TOTAL	RATINGS					SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION	
		1	2	3	4	5	N	(%)
All Assessment Center Participants	72	3	19	32	17	1	50	(69)
Participants Promoted or Newly Appointed	16	0	3	9	4	0	13	(81)

Figure 9. RATINGS OF ALL ASSESSMENT CENTER PARTICIPANTS AND OF PARTICIPANTS PROMOTED OR NEWLY APPOINTED.

Figure 10 gives a breakdown by ethnicity, sex and rating of the participants who were promoted or newly appointed. The figure shows that 50% of the participants promoted or newly appointed were Anglo/Other. Also, there were more Hispanic than Black and more females than males.

RATINGS	PROMOTED OR NEWLY APPOINTED	ETHNICITY			SEX	
		HISPANIC	BLACK	ANGLO/OTHER	FEMALE	MALE
1	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	3	2	0	1	2	1
3	9	3	2	4	7	2
4	4	1	0	3	3	1
5	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	16	6	2	8	12	4
(%)	(100)	(38)	(13)	(50)	(75)	(25)

Figure 10. NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS BY ETHNICITY, SEX, AND RATING WHO WERE PROMOTED OR NEWLY APPOINTED.

Figure 11 shows the level of interest of the participants who were promoted or newly appointed. Forty-four percent of these participants had expressed interest in an administrative position at the elementary level. Thirty-one percent had expressed interest in an administrative position at the secondary level. The rest were either interested in a position as coordinator/supervisor or in more than one administrative position.

PARTICIPANTS	LEVEL OF INTEREST*								TOTAL
	E	S	C	ES	EC	SC	ESC		
All Assessment Center Participants	24 (33%)	26 (36%)	4 (6%)	4 (6%)	8 (11%)	3 (4%)	3 (4%)	72	
Successful Participants	17 (34%)	20 (40%)	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	5 (10%)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)	50	
Participants Promoted or Newly Appointed	7 (44%)	5 (31%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	16	

*E=Elementary, S=Secondary, C=Coordinator/Supervisor; ES=Elementary or Secondary, EC=Elementary or Coordinator/Supervisor, SC=Secondary or Coordinator/Supervisor; ESC=Elementary, Secondary, or Coordinator/Supervisor.

Figure 11. LEVEL OF INTEREST OF ALL ASSESSMENT CENTER PARTICIPANTS, OF SUCCESSFUL PARTICIPANTS, AND OF PARTICIPANTS PROMOTED OR NEWLY APPOINTED.

Assessment Center Participants Available in Administrative Candidate Bank

Of the 50 participants who successfully completed the Assessment Center, 35 are still available in the administrative candidate bank. Figure 12 gives a breakdown of these participants according to center. The number of successful participants not available is also reported.

ASS. CENTER	SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION	NOT AVAILABLE			AVAILABLE	P/A: Persons who recently received a promotion or a new assignment
		P/A	W	TOTAL		
1	9	4	0	4	5	
2	9	2	1	3	6	
3	7	1	1	2	5	
4	8	3	0	3	5	
5	8	3	0	3	5	
6	9	0	0	0	9	
Total	50	13	2	15	35	

W: Persons who resigned from the District or are currently on leave

Figure 12. PARTICIPANTS WHO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE SIX ASSESSMENT CENTERS AND ARE STILL AVAILABLE IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE CANDIDATE BANK.

Correlation Between Assessment Center Scores
and the Administrator Perceiver Scores

The Assessment Center scores were correlated with the administrator perceiver scores obtained by the participants. A low correlation (.24) was found between these two sets of scores. This result indicates that, overall, the administrator perceiver score may not be a very good predictor of Assessment Center performance. Separate correlation analyses performed for the different ethnic and sex groups showed a moderate correlation (.44) between the two sets of scores for the female group. However, no significant correlation was found for any of the other groups. This information is summarized in Figure 13.

	ETHNICITY				SEX	
	Overall	Hispanic	Black	Other	Female	Male
Correlation	.24	.31	-.08	.14	.44	-.09
Level of Significance	.02	.08	.40	.20	.001	.33

Figure 13. CORRELATIONS BETWEEN ASSESSMENT CENTER SCORES
AND THE ADMINISTRATOR PERCEIVER SCORES.

Figure 14 gives the administrator perceiver mean scores for the participants according to the scores received in the Assessment Center. Although the participants with the highest Assessment Center scores tended to have a slightly higher administrator perceiver mean score than the participants with lower Assessment Center scores, the difference was not statistically significant. Figure 14 shows that there was a wide range of administrator perceiver scores among the three groups of Assessment Center scores. There were participants who had obtained low administrator perceiver scores among all three groups.

ACS	1 - 2	3	4 - 5
Mean	30.86	32.06	34.94
Range	16	24	34
(Min.-Max.) *	(23-39)	(20-44)	(21-55)

*Lowest and highest scores

Figure 14. MEAN AND RANGE OF ADMINISTRATOR PERCEIVER
SCORES BY ASSESSMENT CENTER SCORES.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the present evaluation findings, it seems advisable for AISD to fulfill its three-year commitment to the Assessment Center process. The remaining part of this time period may allow the District to strengthen those areas which have proven to be successful and to work on those that seem to require more attention. This time period may also allow the District to gather other information useful in deciding whether to continue using the Assessment Center after the three-year commitment has been fulfilled. Also, the possibility of conducting a validation study, similar to the one performed by NASSP, may be considered.

Because the Assessment Center is one of seven components that comprise the Administrative Leadership Program, which in turn forms part of the larger AISD community, it seems important that future evaluations be conducted within this broader framework. This may provide a better understanding of the Assessment Center process and its effects upon other divisions and programs within the District, such as the Faculty/Staff Recruitment Plan, the Division of Instruction, the Administrative Leadership Program as a whole, and the Division of Operations in general.

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